

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 258250

STADIS//////////

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: EGEN PFOR IS US

SUBJECT: CANCELLATION OF VISIT TO U.S. BY MINISTER BAR-LEV

REF: A) TEL AVIV 7061; B) STATE 257188

1. FOR YOUR BACKGROUND: THE DEPARTMENT LEARNED OCTOBER 15 THAT USDA HAD NEGOTIATED WITH THE ISRAELIS THE TEXT OF AN AGREEMENT, TO BE SIGNED WITH BAR-LEV DURING HIS VISIT, PROVIDING IN DETAIL FOR THE SUPPLY OF SEVERAL AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES TO ISRAEL FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. USDA HAD NOT FOLLOWED THE USUAL CLEARANCE PROCEDURES WITH US, THE TEXT OF THIS AGREEMENT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN ANY LEGAL EXAMINATION, AND IT WAS FOUND TO CONSTITUTE AN EXECUTIVE AGREEMENT AND ONE WHICH WOULD SET A BAD PRECEDENT FROM THE POLICY VIEWPOINT. THE ISRAELI EMBASSY WAS INFORMED THAT THE AGREEMENT COULD NOT BE SIGNED AS PLANNED ON OCTOBER 19, ALTHOUGH A MORE GENERALIZED PRESS RELEASE COULD BE ISSUED EMPHASIZING U.S. RELIABILITY AS TO SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL IN THIS SPHERE. THE ISRAELI EMBASSY OPINED THAT THIS SIGNING

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WAS THE MAIN REASON FOR BAR-LEV VISIT AND IF THERE WERE TO

BE NO SIGNING, BAR-LEV WOULD PROBABLY CANCEL VISIT.
ISRAELI EMBASSY OCTOBER 16 INFORMED DEPARTMENT THAT VISIT
HAD BEEN CANCELLED.

2. IN NOVEMBER 1975, AT THE TIME OF AG SEC BUTZ' VISIT
TO ISRAEL, BUTZ AND BAR-LEV EVIDENTLY DISCUSSED THE POS-
SIBILITY OF A LONG-TERM AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL. WE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT
IN A LETTER OF NOVEMBER 20, 1975 TO BAR-LEV, SECRETARY BUTZ
CONFIRMED HIS PREVIOUS PLEDGE, STATING QUOTE WE ASSURE YOU
THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE ACCESS TO OUR MARKETS TO MEET YOUR
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GROWING LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY IN ISRAEL.
END QUOTE.

3. BUTZ EXTENDED GENERAL INVITATION TO BAR-LEV TO VISIT
THE U.S. WHEN HE WAS IN ISRAEL LAST NOVEMBER. DESPITE THE
DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS LAST SUMMER TO IMPRESS ON AGRICULTURE
THE NEED FOR ADVANCE COORDINATION RE TIMING OF BAR-LEV
VISIT, AGRICULTURE WITHOUT CONSULTING US EXTENDED AN INVI-
TATION THROUGH THE ISRAELI EMBASSY FOR BAR-LEV TO COME IN
OCTOBER. WE NOW KNOW THE HIGHLIGHT OF THIS VISIT WAS TO BE
THE SIGNING OF A FIVE YEAR SUPPLY AGREEMENT COVERING
CERTAIN KEY COMMODITIES. THE AGREEMENT WAS TO BE SIGNED
ON OCTOBER 7 IN WASHINGTON. WITH THE RESIGNATION OF SEC
BUTZ THE BAR-LEV VISIT WAS POSTPONED TO OCTOBER 18, WITH
THE AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED OCTOBER 19. AS INDICATED,
DEPARTMENT WAS NOT INFORMED OF THE WORDING OF THE PROPOSED
AGREEMENT UNTIL OCTOBER 15.

4. IF YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS MATTER
TO BAR-LEV OR OTHER SENIOR ISRAELI OFFICIALS, YOU COULD
INDICATE INFORMALLY AND IN LOW KEY IT IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING
THAT A LAST-MINUTE DIFFICULTY AROSE, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY USG
UNWILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO BE HELPFUL WITH ISRAEL'S
AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES, BUT IN CONNECTION WITH THE LEGAL
COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED IN CONCLUDING AGREEMENTS OF THIS KIND
AS WELL AS A FAILURE OF ADVANCED COORDINATION AMONG THE
VARIOUS US AGENCIES CONCERNED.

5. RE PRESS HANDLING, DEPT SPOKESMAN RECEIVED NO QUERIES
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AT NOON BRIEFING, AND WE ARE RESPONDING TODAY TO INDIVIDUAL
QUERIES BY SIMPLY SAYING WE WILL LOOK INTO MATTER.
ISRAELI EMBASSY INFORMS US IT IS SEEKING TO LOW-KEY BAR-LEV
CANCELLATION, SAYING IT WAS RESULT OF SCHEDULING AND TIMING
DIFFICULTIES. WE UNDERSTAND USDA IS MEETING TUESDAY WITH
REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAELI SUPPLY MISSION AND HOPES TO BE IN
POSITION THEREAFTER TO PUT OUT ANNOUNCEMENT ALONG LINES
DESCRIBED PARA 1 ABOVE. WE WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED AS PRESS

GUIDANCE IS DEVELOPED. KISSINGER

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